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NEWS RELEASE

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Judicial Council Takes Action on Funding Priorities for State Trial Courts

Courthouses, conservatorships, and self-help programs identified as key areas for funding next year

San Francisco—At a public meeting today, the Judicial Council of California reviewed and approved funding priorities for part of the fiscal year 2007–2008 budget for California trial courts. The priorities will apply to a portion of the overall state appropriations limit (SAL) funding adjustment for the judicial branch. The trial court priorities are the following:

- Staffing and operating costs of new and transferring court facilities to open from July 1, 2007, through September 30, 2008, in California. Building safe and secure courthouses is a major goal of the Judicial Council, since many state courthouses are in a state of significant disrepair.
- New funding for self-help programs. A recent statewide survey has shown that the public overwhelmingly favors more self-help services in the courts.
- Additional staffing resources for conservatorship cases, which involve a court assumption of oversight of persons who are unable to take care of themselves or their property.

The funding priorities were identified by the Judicial Council's Trial Court Budget Working Group based on input from presiding judges and executive officers, the public, and employee unions. More detailed proposals will now be developed and forwarded to the council for its review.

OTHER ACTIONS

In other actions, the council:

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- Approved an updated Trial Court Capital-Outlay Plan that prioritizes courthouse construction projects throughout the state. The prioritization of projects in the plan is based on several factors, including security, overcrowding, physical condition, and access to court services.
- Approved a fiscal year 2008–2009 funding request for new courthouses in Butte, Los Angeles, Tehama, and Yolo Counties, and for land acquisition for future expansion of the courthouse for the Court of Appeal, Fourth Appellate District, Division Three in Riverside.
- Approved nine winners of the 2006–2007 Ralph N. Kleps Awards for Improvement in the Administration of the Courts. The awards honor the innovative contributions made by California courts. (See the news release at this link: <http://www.courtinfo.ca.gov/presscenter/newsreleases/NR25-07.PDF>.)
- As part of its consent agenda, the Judicial Council approved a number of new and amended court rules and forms. The meeting agenda and reports are available online: <http://www.courtinfo.ca.gov/jc/documents/age042707.pdf>.

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The Judicial Council is the policymaking body of the California courts, the largest court system in the nation. Under the leadership of the Chief Justice and in accordance with the California Constitution, the council is responsible for ensuring the consistent, independent, impartial, and accessible administration of justice. The Administrative Office of the Courts carries out the official actions of the council and promotes leadership and excellence in court administration.